

AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Twice amended) A method for assessing folding and/or solubility of a protein of interest comprising:
 - a) providing an expression construct comprising (i) a gene encoding a first polypeptide comprising said protein of interest fused to a first segment of a marker protein, wherein said first marker segment has only systematic effects on the folding or solubility of the protein of interest, and (ii) a promoter active in a selected host cell and operably linked to said gene;
 - b) expressing said first polypeptide in said host cell that also expresses a second polypeptide consisting essentially of a second segment of said marker protein, wherein said second marker segment combines with said first marker segment to form a functional marker protein when said first polypeptide is properly folded; and
 - c) assessing the ability of said first and second marker segments to combine to form a functional marker protein,

wherein a greater degree of marker function, as compared to marker function observed with appropriate negative controls, indicates improved folding and/or solubility of said protein of interest.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said first polypeptide comprises said first marker segment fused C-terminal to said protein of interest.
3. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said first polypeptide comprises said first marker segment fused N-terminal to said protein of interest.
12. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein said first marker segment is the α -peptide of β -galactosidase, and said second segment is the α -peptide of β -galactosidase.
14. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a gene encoding said second polypeptide is carried on a chromosome of said host cell.
15. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a gene encoding said second polypeptide is carried episomally in said host cell.
28. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said negative control utilizes a host cell lacking the second polypeptide.